Target for Software Export

3588. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of software exports during 1998-99 and 1999-2000, so far;

(b) what is the expected target for the year 2000-2001;

(c) whether Government have an action plan to achieve software exports to the tune-of US$ 15 billion by 2008; and

(d) if so, broad features of the plan and the strategy to se adopted?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) The Software exports during the year 1998-99 was Rs. 10940 crores as against Rs. 17,000 crores (estimated) during the year 1999-2000.

(b) The software exports are targetted to be Rs. 25,000 crores by the year 2000-2001.

(c) and (d) A target of US$ 50 billion has been set for software exports by the year 2008. The infrastructure requirement in respect of the telecommunication and the need for additional software professionals has been projected. Upgradation of the 43 leading Engineering Colleges to IIT level is also contemplated in this regard. Information Technology Bill and the Semiconductor Integrated Circuit Layout Design Bill have been introduced in the Parliament to provide the legal framework for promoting e-commerce and protecting intellectual property right in the design of Integrated Circuits respectively. 100% foreign direct investment has been permitted in the area of Information Technology for exports.

Promotion of Software Industry

3589. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking steps to promote software industry;

(b) if so, the programmes drawn up thereon for Ninth Plan;

(c) whether steps are being taken to remove reginal inbalance while promoting information technology and in the growth of software industry; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b)

Steps taken by the Government to promote software industry includes liberalisation of industrial policy and streamlining of procedures, provision of fiscal incentives like reduction of custom duty on import of computer hardware and zero duty on softyware, incometax concessions on exports, strengthening of manpower development programme, improvement of quality assurance practices, strengthening of infrastructural facilities through setting up of Software Technology Parks, launching of export promotion campaigns and Business Support Centre (in USA), protection of software IPR, stimulation of R&D efforts and provision of Venture Capital funds.

(c) and (d) Efforts are being made to extend the benefits of the Information Technology in all parts of the country by upgrading the existing STD/ISD/ PCOs to serve as Public Tele-Info Centres (PTICs).

It is proposed to set up Software Technology Parks in all the States. A distance learning programme is being taken up to increase the reach of IT and IT-enabled education in all the regions.

A project has also been launched to set up Community Information Centres at block level in all the North Eastern States including Sikkim to facilitate e-mail, access to internet and computer related training.

Setting up of Information Technology Research Centres

3590. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry propose to set up Information Technology Research Centres in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the facilities therein;

(c) by when these centres would be set up;

(d) whether the centres are being set up according to some parameters; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.